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This report is based on data gathered through a New England Board of Education grant supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The study was undertaken to find out what undergraduate students think about college teaching as a career and what their attitudes are towards selecting the profession for their own career. Questionnaire surveys and interviews with selected students were used in gathering information. The questionnaire, sent to approximately 4,000 students with a B or higher average in 45 colleges and universities in the six New England States, resulted in an 80 percent return (3,280). The report presents the interpretations of student concepts of the role of the college teacher, his working conditions, his qualifications and preparation, and the prestige and attractiveness of his position. The students' attitudes toward teaching as a career for themselves is also discussed.

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Attitudes of College Students Toward College Teaching as a Career

MARY KINNANE

Studies of future college enrollments and future supply of college teachers indicate that unless concerted action is taken to increase the supply of trained college teachers, many students who merit higher education will be denied admission to college. It has been estimated that by 1970, in order to meet an increased enrollment of over 3,000,000 students and maintain a ratio of 15.75 students per teacher, a total of 346,800 teachers will be needed. Of this total, 206,400 will be replacements, and 140,000 will be needed to meet increased enrollment.[1]

One of several regional studies that have been addressed in recent years to a possible crisis in the supply of competent college teachers was that called the College Teacher Program, undertaken in 1959–60 by the New England Board of Higher Education, assisted by a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. Through regional conferences, committees, and research undertakings, the College Teacher Program studied various aspects of the recruitment, preparation, migration, and retention of college teachers.

Since one obvious pool of potential college teachers is the present college population, a major research project, which is reported here, was devoted to college students themselves. It was considered strategic to determine the attitudes and the information of undergraduates concerning college teaching as a career, because such attitudes and information may well be either a help or a hindrance in career decisions. Whether undergraduates have favorable or unfavorable impressions of college teaching as an occupation, whether they have accurate or inaccurate information concerning the necessary qualifications, the length of preparation, the demands and rewards of the teaching profession—whatever the facts are regarding these matters, those concerned with the recruitment of college teachers must logically gear their strategy to these realities. In trying to gain a clear picture of the impressions and information of undergraduates, the study sought answers to two broad questions: (1) What do collegians know and think about the career of college teaching? and (2) What are their attitudes toward the selection of this profession as their own career?

Several studies have been published that have dealt with recruiting and maintaining an adequate supply of college teachers, notably those by Eckert and Stecklein,[2] Gustad,[3] and O'Dowd and Beardslee.[4] The present study differs from such related research in that it focuses essentially on the undergraduate,

[1] *Teacher Supply and Demand in Universities, Colleges, and Junior Colleges, 1957–58,* (Washington: Research Division, National Education Association, June 1959), p. 50.

[2] John E. Stecklein and Ruth E. Eckert, *An Exploratory Study of Factors Influencing the Choice of College Teaching as a Career* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota, 1958).

[3] John W. Gustad, "They March to a Different Drummer," *Educational Record,* July 1949, pp. 204–11.

[4] Donald D. O'Dowd and David C. Beardslee, *College Student Images of a Group of Professions and Occupations* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, April 1960).

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TABLE 1: LISTING OF 45 PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

College or University	Sample Returned (N = 3,380)	Sample Sent (N = 3,892)
Connecticut		
Albertus Magnus College	60	60
Central Connecticut State College	75	75
Connecticut College	60	60
Trinity College, Hartford	58	60
University of Bridgeport	60	75
University of Connecticut	119	120
Wesleyan University	48	60
Yale University	135	180
Maine		
Bowdoin College	54	60
Farmington State Teachers College	43	60
University of Maine	109	120
Massachusetts		
Amherst College	66	80
Assumption College	30	30
Boston College	180	180
Boston University	142	180
Brandeis University	50	75
College of the Holy Cross	59	60
Harvard University	126	180
Massachusetts College of Art	57	60
Northeastern University	147	180
Regis College	60	60
Simmons College	69	75
Smith College	69	75
Springfield College	58	75
Massachusetts (cont'd)		
State Teachers College, Boston	72	75
State Teachers College, Bridgewater	60	60
Suffolk University	52	56
University of Massachusetts	96	120
Wellesley College	59	75
Wheaton College	52	60
New Hampshire		
Dartmouth College	175	188
Keene Teachers College	36	60
Rivier College	30	30
St. Anselm's College	45	45
University of New Hampshire	114	131
Rhode Island		
Brown University	139	180
Providence College	40	60
Rhode Island College of Education	58	62
Salve Regina College	30	30
University of Rhode Island	120	120
Vermont		
Bennington College	57	60
Middlebury College	30	30
St. Michael's College	45	60
State Teachers College, Castleton	30	30
University of Vermont	106	120

his attitudes toward college teaching as a career and the amount of knowledge which he possesses about teaching as a profession.

Data were gathered in three ways: (1) through a questionnaire survey, (2) through interviews conducted by the author, and (3) through interviews conducted by selected college teachers.

A questionnaire survey was sent to approximately 4,000 students in 45 colleges and universities in the six New England states. While the College Teacher Program was specifically regional and primarily concerned with the problems of the New England area, there are obvious reasons why a study of higher education in New England has national implications. The multiplicity of institutions, the variety of collegiate control, and the juxtaposition of ancient and infant colleges and universities give to higher education in New England an importance that is out of proportion to the size of the region.

The list of colleges that participated in the study (see Table 1) is a vindication of this claim. The students selected from the 45 colleges and universities were sophomores, juniors, and seniors with a B or better average, who were presumed to have the qualifications to enter graduate school. Of these, 86 percent, or 3,380 students, returned completed answer sheets. A more detailed analysis of the student sample may be found in Table 2.

In the second phase of the study, the author interviewed 76 dean's list students at six New England institutions.[5] The interview dealt with the same topics covered in the questionnaire. The purpose of the interviews was to probe more deeply into student attitudes and impressions and to serve as a validity check on the data provided by the questionnaire.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE IN VARIOUS DESCRIPTIVE CATEGORIES

(N=3,380)

Category	*Percent*
Sophomore	27
Junior	33
Senior	40
Male	58
Female	42
Urban college or university	50
Rural college or university	50
University	50
College	50
Public institution	32
Private institution	68
All-male student body	28
All-female student body	16
Coeducational student body	56
Major Field	
Liberal arts	33
Physical science	22
Social science	7
Education	11
Engineering	5
Technical-medical	6
Business administration	10
Fine arts	3
Other	3

In the third phase of the study, 22 professors from nine New England universities and colleges (identified as outstanding teachers by their presidents) interviewed 88 of their most promising students. In their disciplines, the professors were about equally divided among the humanities, the physical sciences, and the social sciences.

Major findings of the study may be summarized under the broad headings: students' concept of the role of the college teacher, students' concept of the working conditions of the college teacher, and students' concept of the attractiveness and prestige of college teaching.

[5] Bennington College, Boston College, Bowdoin College, Brown University, Keene Teachers College, Rhode Island College of Education, University of Massachusetts, Wesleyan University, Yale University.

Students' concept of the role of the college teacher

When collegians are asked what type of person is likely to become a college teacher, they strongly reject the image of a remote, or ivory tower, figure. They believe that college teachers are drawn equally from those who find satisfaction in helping young people and those who find satisfaction in research. This attitude is reinforced by the fact that the majority of undergraduates believe that the outstanding characteristic of the ideal college professor is his interest in his students. Undergraduates again emphasize the human relations values in college teaching when they rate opportunity to work with young people on a par with opportunity to remain intellectually alive as the aspect of college teaching that seems to them to be most satisfying.

When asked to identify the outstanding ability needed in college teaching, the students choose the ability to lecture and discuss. Fifty-two percent of these collegians share the dominant image of the college professor as essentially a classroom teacher. In their public statements, university presidents, deans, and departmental chairmen piously support this student judgment on the importance of teaching. Yet one of the paradoxes (or scandals) of American higher education is the slight emphasis placed upon the college professor's classroom activity in the evaluation, recruitment, promotion, and retention of faculty members. With the current emphasis upon faculty writing, some will be surprised at the collegians' apparently low esteem of this faculty function. However, the students realistically speculate that writing is the principal basis for promotion. Their concept of the college teacher as a lecturer is reaffirmed when students with liberal arts majors, with science majors, and from Ivy League schools agree with the majority of other collegians that graduate school training should be geared primarily to producing an articulate person who teaches and communicates effectively. The thus far unavailing attempts to stir graduate schools to be concerned about the production of teachers as well as of scholars and the recruitment practices of college departments which count research more important than effective teaching, indicate how far wide of reality are these undergraduate opinions. It would seem that undergraduates, regardless of kind of collegiate experiences, unconsciously favor the recommended but scorned teaching Ph.D.

Students' concept of the working conditions of the college teacher

To learn the accuracy of knowledge that college students possess of working conditions of college teachers, questions were asked on such topics as teaching load, basis for promotion, time allocation, and restrictions on personal freedom. Responses showed that students have a fairly realistic concept of the number of hours per week spent by a teacher in the classroom. On questionnaire responses, the majority (47 percent) stated nine to thirteen hours; 41 percent estimated fourteen to twenty-four hours. There may be an implicit or unconscious tribute to their teachers in the large number (33 percent) who indicate that the professor spends most of his time in preparing lectures. There are as many students who feel that the professor spends most of his time on correction of assignments and paper work as there are who think that most of his time is spent on research and writing.

In selecting relatively easy or difficult aspects of the job, counseling of students was deemed easiest, and routine paper work and committee work, the most difficult. Teaching is seen to be more difficult than research. The fact that one-fourth of the students consider counseling to be the easiest part of the professors' work may indicate an unsophisticated grasp of

what is involved in counseling or may indicate that they feel that professors do not exert special effort in this phase of their responsibility. Students in teacher education institutions are less prone to judge counseling as an easy task, possibly because they have a greater familiarity with formal counseling procedures. In choosing routine paper work and committee work as the most difficult aspect, we may ask whether students are tending to equate routine with difficulty.

Responses to questions concerning restrictions that might be placed on the social life of the college teacher indicate that the students do not feel that the college teacher is under any disadvantages as compared with the members of other professions. They feel that he is possibly more restricted than the doctor, who is (in their opinion) more restricted than the lawyer. Businessmen, they think, are least restricted. But the difference in restriction is slight and in no way (in their opinion) deters prospective college teachers from selecting this career. Interviews with students revealed that in their opinion whatever restrictions there are on the political or social activities of college teachers derive from the innumerable and varied burdens of their professional life. Actually, a positive attitude seems to prevail among students on these topics, and they feel (83 percent) that the college teacher participates as actively in community and political affairs as other professional persons. Students certainly do not have the image of the ivory tower professor cut off from participation in the life of a community, and in the light of recent political appointments their attitude would seem to be correct.

A majority of students indicate they would expend most effort in research and writing were they seeking promotion in a professorial career. This is a realistic view and need not contradict their idealistic view of the teacher as the devoted mentor of students. As indicated above, the students choose research and publication as the principal basis on which professors are promoted. The student response that might draw the sharpest reactions in faculty clubs is the opinion of one-third of the students that the principal basis for promotion is length of service. In any event, students sense a divorce between the professor's activities that are best for his students and those that are best for his personal advancement.

Students' concept of the qualifications and preparation for a career as a college teacher

To find out the college students' opinions of the qualifications needed for entering college teaching, items were presented concerning level of intelligence, undergraduate grades, and graduate preparation required for the college teaching profession.

Over 80 percent feel that an IQ of 120 or more is required. It is interesting that 60 percent of the students at Ivy League colleges place the college teacher in the class of an IQ of 130 and over, whereas only one-third of students in other colleges agree with this judgment. Among teacher education students, 75 percent expect an IQ of 130 or less. Rather than indicating lower expectations on the part of those in teacher education institutions, this figure may reflect their greater understanding of the IQ, of the fact that fewer than two out of one hundred have IQ's of 130 or higher. Students generally agree that a college record consisting of more A's than B's is required, although one might be disturbed at the 13 percent who feel that grades of mostly B's with a few C's would be acceptable. This belief may well reflect on their knowledge of the academic requirements for achieving the status of college teacher. Because of the current emphasis on scientific excellence, an analysis of science

majors' ratings was made on items concerned with qualifications for college teaching, but they do not differ significantly from the ratings of students in nonscientific disciplines.

When the college students were asked to identify the field of college teaching that requires the longest period of graduate study, several interesting opinions emerged. In the first place, the undergraduates' concept of the length of time required for preparation in teaching the humanities is unrealistic. Only 13 percent feel that the longest time is required for the humanities. This is in marked contrast with the recent self-criticism by leaders of graduate education in the humanities, who have expressed concern at the often unconscionable length of time required of doctoral candidates in the humanities. It is probably the present high prestige of science that causes students to believe that the preparation for teaching physical sciences takes longer than is required to teach any other discipline. On the other hand, it is possible and even probable that the respondents may have confused the longest course of study with what would in fact be the most difficult for them; although it would have to be noted that half of the physical science majors also believe that science requires the lengthiest preparation.

When they were asked what were the wisest procedures to follow in pursuing graduate education for college teaching, the largest number of undergraduates indicated that they lack sufficient information on this topic. This impression of having inadequate information is expressed by as large a proportion of seniors and juniors as of sophomores. Undergraduates studying on a university campus might be expected to be familiar with the requirements and procedures of graduate education. However, university undergraduates showed no greater familiarity than nonuniversity students with the requirements for higher studies. This situation could raise questions about the amount and quality of counseling done at the undergraduate level concerning graduate education for the teaching profession.

By and large, the undergraduates' responses on this questionnaire express confidence in the ready availability of financial assistance for graduate education. Seventy-one percent indicate that the chances of receiving financial aid for graduate school are very good or good, but a high 58 percent indicate they lack information on the amount of this assistance. Science students seem the most knowledgeable group in this area. It is interesting to note that a large number of the college students believe that the most common form of graduate aid is the teaching fellowship. There may be a misunderstanding of terminology here, but the teaching fellowship does not outnumber other kinds of graduate school opportunities.

The students are optimistic about the chances of obtaining a position as a college teacher. Over 80 percent indicate that a person can teach full time in college with two years or less of graduate study, while 13 percent feel that no graduate study is required. These students may have been thinking of teaching fellows, who begin teaching college classes as they initiate graduate study. The teaching fellow, however, is not strictly a full-time faculty member. Evidently the publicity concerning the teacher shortage has been effective, since 96 percent of college students believe that job opportunities in colleges in the future will be plentiful.

Students' concept of the attractiveness and prestige of the profession

To determine the college students' concept of the attractiveness or prestige of the profession of college teaching, they were asked to choose the least and most attractive aspects of college teaching, to

compare the prestige of college teaching with other professions, and to estimate the salary range from instructor to professor. The majority of students are attracted by the intellectual stimulation and the cultural environment of the college man's position, whereas the public prestige of college teaching and financial compensation are the least appealing elements.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the students show some ambivalence with respect to working conditions. It is the second highest choice as the most attractive and also as the least attractive feature of faculty life. When the students were asked to name a fringe benefit of the profession that would be most attractive to them personally, an interesting picture of the values of the students and the realism of their assessment of the career emerged. The benefit most appealing to the majority of students is the nine-month working year with the summer free. Possibly reinforcing the importance they seem to attach elsewhere to research and publication, 46 percent think reduced classes to further the pursuit of research and writing, and an occasional year or semester off with pay for research purposes, are most attractive. The low response to regular salary increments may indicate a slight interest in security, or perhaps, consistent with their low estimate of salaries, they may regard the increment as insignificant.

In general, students seemed to be misinformed on the existing salary rates for college professors. For example, 56 percent of respondents on the questionnaire place the beginning salary of the college instructor between $2,500 and $4,500; 44 percent place the salary between $3,500 and $4,500. One might expect students at Ivy League colleges to have a higher estimate of the beginning salary, yet 68 percent of these respondents placed the beginning salary under $4,500. On the other hand, this group is more realistic when estimating the average salary of a full professor. Seventy-eight percent place him in the $8,000 to $12,000 bracket, whereas 43 percent of students of institutions other than Ivy League schools place him in the $4,000 to $8,000 bracket. The inaccuracy of the students' estimates is shown when they are compared with recent data on faculty salaries.[6]

Respondents were given the opportunity of expressing both their perception of the general stereotype of the college teacher and their personal judgment of his prestige. Responses revealed that most college students feel that the general public rates college teaching below medicine and law. Fourteen percent think most people rate it below business and engineering also. An analysis of the responses on the basis of parental occupation indicates that 22 percent of collegians whose parents are classified as major business executives think of college teaching as inferior in status to both business and engineering. However, collegians do not accept the stereotyped concepts of the professor's status. Fifty-two percent of them rate it equal to or higher than medicine and law. The difference between the public view and the collegian view is also indicated by the fact that only 5 percent of student respondents consider college teaching to be inferior in status to business and engineering. The conscious dissociation from the stereotyped image of the professor's prestige by the collegians was reinforced and spelled out in a number of the interviews. Some students explained that, while they themselves regard the college teacher as a person of high status, this opinion is not shared by their families. Several students expressed the view that college professors and, with them, col-

[6] *Salaries Paid and Salary Practices in Universities, Colleges, and Junior Colleges, 1959–60* (Washington: Research Division, National Education Association, March 1960), pp. 18–19.

lege students, should disregard the low esteem of the nonacademic public.

The majority of collegians do feel that the major cause of possible low prestige of the teaching profession is low salaries. However, nearly one-third ascribe it to the low status of liberal learning in our culture and 13 percent to the ivory tower nature of the work. Students in Ivy League colleges differ from their colleagues in other schools in choosing the low status of liberal learning as the chief factor militating against the prestige of the teaching fraternity. Only 8 percent of the respondents, however, considered lack of public respect to be a possible deterrent to entering the profession.

In summary, it seems that while ascribing to others a low opinion of the profession of college teacher, collegians indicate that this would not deter them from embracing college teaching as a career.

College students' attitude toward college teaching as a career choice.—Students were asked to consider such questions as the time when such a career decision is made, the persons having the greatest influence on this decision, and the selection of college teaching as a career for themselves.

Fifty-nine percent of the total group think the decision is made in the last two years of college. Significantly, more than one-fourth of the sophomores feel that this decision is made in the first two years, whereas in the junior and senior years more students choose the last two years of college or the undergraduate school as the time for this decision. This may well indicate that younger college students expect to make a career choice early, but that in fact these choices are made toward the end of the college years or after graduation. Perhaps this indicates the value of such programs as the University of Pittsburgh Plan, in which outstanding college students are encouraged even in their freshman year to think of becoming college teachers.

An overwhelming majority of students believe that the person principally influencing students to a career in college teaching is the college professor. In their view the influence of reading, friends, and family are minimal compared with the influence of the faculty contact. It would appear that the college teacher is the number one recruiter for members of his profession.

Students feel that the high school or college counselor has very little influence on this career choice. When the sample was divided according to type of institution, it was seen that the influence of the college counselor was considered least in private institutions and greatest in teacher education and state institutions. This may indicate a greater stress placed on counseling in state institutions as contrasted with private institutions, and it probably reflects the attention given to the nature and importance of counseling in teacher education institutions. However, in all types of institutions the role of the college professor eclipses that of the counselor in motivating students toward college teaching as a career. The relatively slight influence of reading concerning the occupation of college teaching that was revealed in the student responses may indicate that available career guidance material in this field is not effective, is insufficient, or is too recent to have influenced the present student population.

When asked whether they had thought of college teaching as a personal career choice, 62 percent responded affirmatively. A breakdown of these responses revealed that in Ivy League colleges the percentage was even higher (73 percent), despite their pessimistic estimate of college teachers' salaries. In all institutions, 20 percent more men than women say they have seriously thought of becoming a college teacher. The fact that 20 percent more seniors than sopho-

mores gave this response reinforces the hypothesis that this career decision is made late in the college years. More liberal arts majors than nonliberal arts majors indicate that they have seriously considered teaching. Only 14 percent indicate that college teaching is their first choice. However, one-third of the respondents place college teaching as their first, second, or third choice.

On the negative side, only one-fourth of the students say that they have definitely excluded college teaching. From these data, it seems that there is today in our college lecture halls and laboratories a rich vineyard for teacher recruiters to cultivate.

In summary, it seems clear that two pieces of publicity have definitely left their mark on the minds of students: that teachers' salaries are low, and that there is no shortage of jobs in our colleges and universities. The students are certain that the profession is enjoying an upward trend as far as prestige is concerned. They think that some notions of college teaching being a second-rate profession are being conveyed and continued by some teachers themselves who talk about low salaries and who unwittingly belittle the teaching vocation when they encourage their students to be, to quote one man, "a physicist rather than a teacher of physics."

In spite of the many who thought that professorial example (rather than exhortation) is the most important factor in influencing students toward considering teaching as a career, many were flattered that they had been included in this study and confessed that they had never really given the college teaching profession much thought. They added, on second thought, that maybe if more college teachers were to introduce the subject, discussion about the teaching profession might be more common, and more students would think about it as a personal career choice. Finally, on the basis of this sample of collegians, it may be said that in general the students have the highest respect for their mentors and that today's undergraduate holds the career of college teaching in high regard.